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ABSTRACT

In this conference speech the author offers a rationale for the training of field agents and, moreover, analyzes how field agents can carry out planned educational change. Offering three brief descriptions on theoretical models illustrating how change occurs, the author portrays: 1) The Social Interaction Model; 2) The Problem-Solver Model; and 3) The Research, Development, Diffusion, and Adoption (RDD&A) Model which provides a framework for the field agent program. Change in education is slow, according to this theory, not because of a lack of basic research or development of new products, but, rather, because of problems at the diffusion and adoption stages. Problems occur in the diffusion process because potential adopters are not aware of innovations, depend on personal sources for information, and need help in evaluating innovative processes. During the adoption process, a trial process consisting of the innovative program being applied on a small scale, sustained assistance at the local level is needed. To conclude, field agents can increase the rate of diffusion and adoption in numerous ways, thereby contributing to educational change. (SJM)

March, 1971

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOCIAL
STUDIES FIELD AGENT TRAINING PROGRAM

by
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I suppose that after these many months of informal communications with all of you it is time for Howard and me to come clean regarding what we are really up to with the Social Studies Field Agent Program. This baring of the soul is certainly one of my prime objectives this evening. In addition, I hope the thoughts which I share with you will serve as springboards for tomorrow's discussions. I chose the term springboard with care because I want my remarks to be a jumping off point, not restrictions on what is discussed.

I have structured what I have to say around questions which I believe are of concern to you. It is not that I am a mind reader but I have listened carefully to your comments during my recent visits with some of you. I have also looked at the reports of the baseline data gathering team who visited you last fall. If I overlook a particular question which you would like answered feel free to fire away during the question and answer period.

One question which I have heard in various forms goes something like this: What prompted you and Howard to want to train field agents? In retrospect, I can identify two motivations for what we are doing. The first is quite personal for both Howard and me. In 1964 I came to Indiana University as Coordinator for School Social Studies. The charge to each of the five coordinators is to improve the teaching of their subjects in the schools of Indiana,

a charge that makes brave men shudder and people with poor judgment accept the job. In practice I spent most of my time informing social studies teachers of alternative products and ideas, demonstrating some of these in their schools, and assisting local people in choosing among those that seemed to them to be promising. Among the many frustrations generated by such activities, two seem related to my desire to train people like our field agents. The first of these grew out of the mere size of my territory. There is simply no way that one person, or five for that matter, can provide all the diffusion services requested by Indiana schools. I viewed the field agent program as one method of multiplying my hands. My second frustration was a result of my being able to spend only one or two days working with any one school system. While there are many diffusion activities which lend themselves to one day stands there are many others, especially as one approaches installation, that require sustained attention on the part of someone. Needless to say, I saw the field agents as one means of providing on-going attention to planned change in a given school or system.

I believe I can speak for Howard when I say that a somewhat different set of motives prompted him to support a field agent program. As many of you know, Howard is primarily a developer of social studies curriculum materials. In fact, he is one of the two authors of the new ninth grade civics course, AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR, developed here in our Social Studies Development Center, which he also directs. Two year of pilot trials of APB

convinced Howard that there were many diffusion and installation problems which needed systematic attention. Our experience in conducting the national Civics Dissemination Institutes further persuaded both of us that schools wanted help in installing some of the ideas and products called the new social studies. Howard was able to convince the Ford Foundation that a field agent feasibility study was needed and they commissioned him to do one. I'll not take the time this evening to review his findings and recommendations except to say that they were a further motivation to launch our own field agent program.

In short, Howard and I were two people frustrated by our limited success in helping schools carry out planned change and we saw the field agents as one way of enabling schools to better accomplish what they desired.

The general situation in social studies accounted for a second set of circumstances pushing us into the field agent program. As you will note from some of the reprints which we included in your packets and from what Howard will discuss tomorrow morning, there is a national reform movement underway in social studies. I believe it is not unjustified to say that Indiana University people have played a major role in that movement. I'm referring to people like Shirley Engle, John Patrick, Fred Smith, Bob Hanvey, Allen Glenn, Judy Gillespie, Gene Asher, Lee Anderson, Bob Barr, Helen Sagl, Maxine Dunfee, Dorothy Skeel, Lee Ehman, and Howard. All of these people have participated actively in what some have optimistically termed the revolution in social studies.

Despite all the money and energy which we and others have expended most schools are still teaching social studies much like they did ten years ago. Ironically, some of the leaders in the reform movement are moving on to new crusades at a time when most schools have still to discover the new social studies. I personally find that a grim reminder that change still occurs at a painfully slow rate, hotpants notwithstanding.

This leads me to a second question which is occasionally raised, but much less often than the previous one. The question is: How does change occur? I suspect that you would be disappointed if you visited a college campus and didn't hear someone mention theoretical models, so I'll do that, but only briefly, leaving such detailed discussions to the graduate seminars.

TRANSPARENCY (see diagram 1 in appendix)

One way to explain change is to use the Social Interaction perspective (SI). As you can see on the transparency, the SI model places emphasis upon one's place in the social structure to explain how change occurs. Personal relationships, group memberships, power and influence structures, and opinion leaders are important concepts employed in this theory. As you will see later, we have borrowed from the SI model in modifying the RDD&I model.

TRANSPARENCY (see diagram 2 in appendix)

The Problem-Solver model (PS) is shown in this second transparency. As you can see, user need, diagnosis, outside consultants; and self-initiated change are important components in this explanation. You will see that we have borrowed here also.

TRANSPARENCY (see diagram 3 in appendix)

Finally, we have the RDD&A model, Research, Development, Diffusion, and Adoption. As depicted on the transparency, rationality, planning, and a division of labor are important in this explanation. I suppose if you were to weigh these theories in terms of the extent to which our field agent program borrows from each you would find that the RDD&A model has had the most influence upon our thinking. In order that you not believe that we lean on it simply because Deans Clark and Guba, and until recently Brickell, are here at Indiana I can honestly report that we were influenced by their theory before any of them moved to Bloomington.

As I describe what we see as the field agent's role you will see that we have indeed been eclectic in piecing together our own theory of how to promote change and you will have to decide whether or not it applies to your situation.

Let me now turn to the question that I'll bet you were expecting when I launched into the models bit, namely: Why is change in education so slow to occur? I'll give you our answer to that question by going back to the models. If we look at the RDD&A model we can begin to answer the question by asking a series of related, analytic questions. For example, has there been adequate research to support change in social studies? We may disagree on this one, but I believe that the answer is a qualified yes. We certainly know enough about how children learn to realize

that if cognitive skills are one of our primary objectives the materials and teaching strategies currently in use in most social studies classrooms are not consistent with that objective. It would of course be nice to have answers to all our questions before proceeding with reform, but the point is that we already have a sufficient research base to enable us to do better than which we keep saying we want to do. It is my opinion that it is not a lack of basic research which accounts for the slow rate of change in social studies.

Perhaps then, change is impeded by a lack of development, the second category in the RDD&A model. Again, I believe the answer is no. Had we asked this question as recently as five years ago the answer, at least in social studies, would have been yes. The flood of new, and basically different, materials (products if you will) during that period has changed all that. The teacher or school system wishing to teach a different type of social studies now has among his options commercial materials which have an inquiry base and when used as intended will produce reasonably predictable results. Howard will describe these materials in much greater detail tomorrow morning and many will be on display for your perusal all day tomorrow. Again, the point is that our current development base is sufficient to permit much more change in social studies than to date has occurred.

Let's continue our questioning by turning to the third RDD&A stage, that of diffusion. Here we can ask: Are the potential adopters (users) of the newly developed products and practices conducting local trials to see if they meet some of their needs? If the answer to this question is no, as I believe it is, then we must also ask, why aren't they? In other words, if we have experienced at least minimal RESEARCH, and if recent DEVELOPMENT activities have produced numerous new products, why aren't more schools using them? For the purposes of discussion at least, I suggest that the problem lies in the DIFFUSION AND ADOPTION STAGES. ✓

Everett Rogers has identified three different stages in the diffusion process, and here we have borrowed from the Social Interaction model. Rogers' three stages are AWARENESS, INTEREST, ✓ AND EVALUATION.

Rogers describes AWARENESS as the point at which the individual learns of the existence of an innovation. I submit that it is at this point at which change stops for many potential adopters simply because they have never heard of the innovations which are available. One doesn't adopt what he has never heard of.

There are at least two explanations for the generally low state of awareness on the part of many social studies teachers. One is the absence of a well developed net of professional ✓ communications through which information about innovations is disseminated. I'll venture a guess that fewer than 30% of the potential adopters in the area served by our program know about

most of the new products currently available for teaching social studies. I believe that it is useful to occasionally remind ourselves that most social studies teachers do not receive SOCIAL EDUCATION, do not belong to a state or regional social studies organization, do not attend the meetings of the National Council for the Social Studies, the Indiana Council for the Social Studies or other such state associations. A communications net consists of not only message senders, but also of receivers of those messages and it is in this latter respect that the net is underdeveloped.

A second reason why educational inventions remain invisible, even to the extent that schools ten miles apart often know little about what the other is doing, lies in the area of role expectations. Teachers do not perceive as a part of their role the publishing of articles describing new ways they have found for teaching social studies. I'm convinced that another facet of this role problem is the myth that it is unprofessional to borrow what others have invented or to blow one's own horn once he has invented something of worth. The result of such a myth is that we continually reinvent the wheel at tremendous local cost in time, energy and dollars. Contrast this with the way surgeons flock to learn and use a new operating procedure "invented" by a colleague. Those of us in education must devise some process that will allow our Christian Barnards to go into print or on TV rather than into seclusion.

Rogers' second stage of diffusion is INTEREST, that point at which the individual seeks more information about, and

considers the merits of, the innovation. At this point we are talking about another group of people, those who have heard of the innovations in social studies but who have sought no further information about them. Often the failure to generate interest results from the way in which the potential adopter initially becomes aware of the innovation. Research indicates that the early adopters depend more upon cosmopolite sources of information such as newsletters and conventions, than do the middle and late adopters, who look much more to personal sources for their information. The source of the message appears to be an important variable in generating interest and keeping change alive.

How one learns about the innovation is also important. Recall, if you will, that the vacuum cleaner salesman doesn't call you on the phone and describe what a great job his product will do. Instead, he comes to your home and demonstrates how his product will meet your needs. In my own experience it didn't take long to realize that if I wanted to convince teachers of the merits of inquiry I was going to have to stop describing inquiry teaching and begin demonstrating it with their students in their schools. It would be difficult for us to overestimate the importance of demonstrating the innovation in classroom settings similar to those of the potential adopters, which is at least one reason why so many laboratory schools are being closed, which brings me to the third stage of diffusion, namely EVALUATION.

The EVALUATION stage is that point at which the potential adopter mentally weighs the merits of the innovation for his particular situation. This go-no-go decision stage is a vital one if we are to change the teaching of social studies in the schools. All our efforts will be wasted if the potential adopter decides at this point that the materials or practices are not for him. If we are to increase our chances of success we need to realize what factors seem to influence many to decide not to move on to the trial stage, first step toward installation.

There are many factors which impinge upon the decision of whether to try a new product or practice. As starters I propose the following negative influences with which our field agents hope to cope:

1. Many of the new social studies materials require the adopter to acquire new attitudes, knowledge or skills. The attitude area presents us with particularly difficult problems.
2. The myth, or belief, on the part of many in education that it is somehow unprofessional to borrow from others is an especially potent force at this stage in the change process.
3. Fear of community sanctions may also influence the potential adopter to pass up a trial of the innovation. Harmon Zeigler has documented such fears, and while they are often unfounded, they are, nonetheless, real and

damaging to the change process. Somehow we manage to have just enough sex education and Bloomfield flag burning experiences to keep these kinds of considerations in the minds of potential adopters.

4. The vagueness of educational objectives and the general absence of any specific feedback system can also work to influence the potential adopter to decide against the trial of the innovation. How will he know if it is better than what he currently uses or does? The point is that he won't as long as the criteria are as vague as, "The new course materials will produce more loyal and involved citizens."
5. Finally, and related to the preceeding factor, is the fact that in social studies, and in education generally for that matter, we lack wide agreement upon the salient features on which innovations can and should be compared. The Educational Products Information Exchange has made some stabs at this problem, but so far without much success.

Thus far I have discussed change in terms of four steps: research, development, diffusion, and adoption. I have described in more detail three steps in diffusion, i.e., awareness, interest, and evaluation. Let me now say a brief word about the trial process, the first stage in adoption.

The trial process consists simply of the innovation being applied on a small scale. Up to this point the primary actors in diffusion have been the editors of newsletters, state supervisors, people in the development projects, book salesmen, a few university professors, and anyone else whose main function includes creating awareness, increasing interest, and providing information to assist the adopter in deciding whether or not to try the innovation. Most such people are ill prepared to assist when changes reach the adoption stage. To try, adapt, and install the innovation, be it a new sociology course or plastic plumbing for new homes, requires sustained assistance at the local level, and that is the point at which most of you have the greatest concern.

During the trial period certain questions must be answered. Will the product produce the advertised results when used by our teachers with our students? Can the product be adapted to meet local needs and constraints? For example, can one use units in a sequence different from that intended by the developer and still achieve the desired outcomes? Do other teachers appear to be willing to adopt the program once it has been "proven" locally? If these and related questions can be answered in the affirmative the chances are good that the course, unit, materials, or whatever, will be adopted on a wider scale.

In summary, the question which I posed sometime ago was: Why is change in education so slow to occur? If one uses the RDD& model as a framework I believe the answers currently lie in the diffusion and adoption stages, not in the research and

development stages.

If you're still with me you may sense that we are near the moment of truth because I now must answer the question: So, how does the field agent fit into all this?; how can he help increase the rate of diffusion and adoption? I'll try to answer this by quickly reviewing the stages of awareness, interest, evaluation, and trial as the field agent relates to them.

We see the field agent making a two front assault on the problem of AWARENESS, or really the lack of it. We have been assisting your field agent to develop his own information net. He has been inundated with printed materials about new products, acquainted further with inquiry strategies, encouraged to join professional organizations having to do with the teaching of social studies. Your field agent can tell you the extent to which we have been successful in raising his level of awareness of innovations in social studies. But even if we have been successful that is only one-half the battle. Alfred North Whitehead once remarked that knowledge keeps no better than fish. If your field agent doesn't systematically work at updating his awareness he will be of little use to you in two or three years. We hope to assist him by the three two-day refresher workshops scheduled for next year (for which you have agreed to pick up the tab), by periodically visiting with him in your school setting and sending him cassettes with updated information about new developments, by seeing that he stays on our NEWS AND NOTES mailing list. We will also meet next

year in Denver at the National Council for the Social Studies Convention and at the Indiana Council for the Social Studies meeting. In fact, we hope that the field agent proves so valuable to you that you will continue to bear the costs of such awareness directed activities long after the letter of agreement obligations have been met.

The field agents also intend to raise the level of awareness of their colleagues and others in the community through activities such as local newsletters, preplanned departmental and in-service meetings, talks to PTA's and service clubs, section meetings at professional meetings and active participation in social studies organizations. Jim Nay may get an article in SOCIAL EDUCATION. We quite frankly are hoping that your field agent becomes one of the people in your system that others look to when they want to know what is going on in social studies.

The field agents also plan to work very hard at increasing colleague interest in social studies innovations. You will recall that earlier I stated that the nature of many demonstrations left potential adopters unconvinced that a product or practice would work in their particular setting. The field agent will be in a position to overcome this by encouraging others to visit his classroom (that alone will be a revolution in many schools) and by teaching demonstration lessons for local groups.

I also mentioned that the source of information was an important factor in generating interest. When your field agent applied for this program you told us that he had the trust and respect of his colleagues, an important factor if his messages are to have credibility. While the field agent will rely upon cosmopolite sources for information about what is new, those around him will rely much more on him for such information.

The field agents will be prepared to assist change at the EVALUATION stage by doing things like:

1. helping people ask the right questions when deciding whether or not to try an innovation. Toward this end they have all had experience with the Curriculum Materials Analysis System, various inter-action analysis systems, the ERIC system, and some in fact have devised their own analysis systems. Ron Van Sickle, for example, has a very comprehensive analysis system for use in selecting educational games and simulations.
2. knowing where to get hard data on the performance of certain innovations and how to bring that data to bear on the go-no-go decision.
3. putting interested adopters in contact with those who have already tried the product or strategy. In some cases this may involve the field agent accompanying the teacher(s) to another school, just one of many ways that he might use those 26 days of substitute time which you have agreed to provide during the follow-up year.

4. helping divide complex innovations so that small trials can take place, an important factor for early adopters. In fact, I hope our guys argue against the system or school-wide adoption of untested innovations, even when they are those which we would like to see used.

Finally, the field agents will be prepared to assist people in in your schools when change reaches the trial stage by engaging in activities such as:

1. assisting in the actual acquisition of the materials to be tried. People get hung up on all sorts of little snags, one of which is no more than not knowing exactly where to order a set of materials or knowing how to read a catalogue.
2. helping teachers acquire the new skills necessary to effectively handle an innovation. Since we have not prepared the field agents as teacher trainers we are ready to assist them with such training activities.
3. providing sustained emotional support for those trying new ways of teaching social studies. One reason we encouraged you to bring a teacher along to this conference was to provide your field agent with just such support. We also want the field agent to give increased visibility to such trials when they take place. Even such small rewards may seem significant to teachers who perceive little or no incentive for keeping up in social studies.
4. assisting in creating or using a feedback system in order that the decision of whether or not to continue after the trial can be a more informed one.

To recap, the field agent won't come back a miracle worker who will transform your social studies program overnight. He won't be peddling a specific product though I suspect that all will try to foster and further a thing called inquiry or the new social studies. Some of them are devising ways to engage the faculty in a self-diagnostic exercise while others will rely on their own diagnosis of the local situation. We hope that all will increase awareness, stimulate interest, assist in the evaluation decision, and help teachers begin small trails of new innovations in social studies.

I would like to close with a brace of questions: What can you do to help the field agent help you? and, What are the field agent's obligations to you?

First, some do's and don'ts in the care and feeding of your field agent.

1. Do provide him with support. Your attendance here is just that, but also give him the opportunity to talk to the faculty about what he will be up to, send him to visit other innovative schools, see that the local and school news media know about him and, that you think his job is an important one.
2. Do make sure that he has the experimental materials to use in his own class next year.
3. Do free him to work with other teachers, either through the 26 days of substitute time or the reduced teaching load which some of you have already planned.

4. Do put him on important committees where really significant decisions are made but spare him from those described by Howard in the paper in your packet titled, "How to Revolutionize the Social Studies While Firing Blanks."
5. Don't make him just a paper shuffler or orderer of materials. I'm convinced that he is much too valuable an asset to have him wasted doing clerk type activities.
6. Don't put him in a position of having to make decisions when he doesn't have the power or authority to make them stick. Our guys fully expect to have to continually fight a serious role conflict and you can help by remembering that about the only power they personally have is that of friendly persuasion.
7. Do make an additional small investment to make it possible for him to maintain some all-important contacts. I'm talking about things like access to long distance phone calls, institutional memberships in certain organizations, small sets of new materials, help in covering expenses to attend professional meetings, and his return trips to I.U. Your letter of agreement obligates you to some of these, but for only one year. We hope they will continue well beyond that.

Finally, we believe the field agent owes you some things. For starters, he must be more than simply a teacher of social studies, though the gravitational pull toward that old role will be substantial. Our folks are aware of the high risks of being

an advocate of change, yet I believe to a person they are committed to such a role.

The field agents expect their lives to be more complicated next year because they know that the role involves extra work on their part. It means they will be attending more meetings, seeking out others who might be interested in social studies, encouraging people to visit their classes, doing their homework in terms of keeping abreast of new developments as they occur, and providing leadership in whatever group they find themselves. This latter, by the way, doesn't mean running every show in sight but it does mean attending meetings, having done one's homework, and sometimes even with a proposal.

The field agents also have an obligation to call for help, both from you and from us. We intend to provide sustained follow-up support for these eleven gentlemen and generally this will be at their request. Knowing when to yell for help is not a weakness.

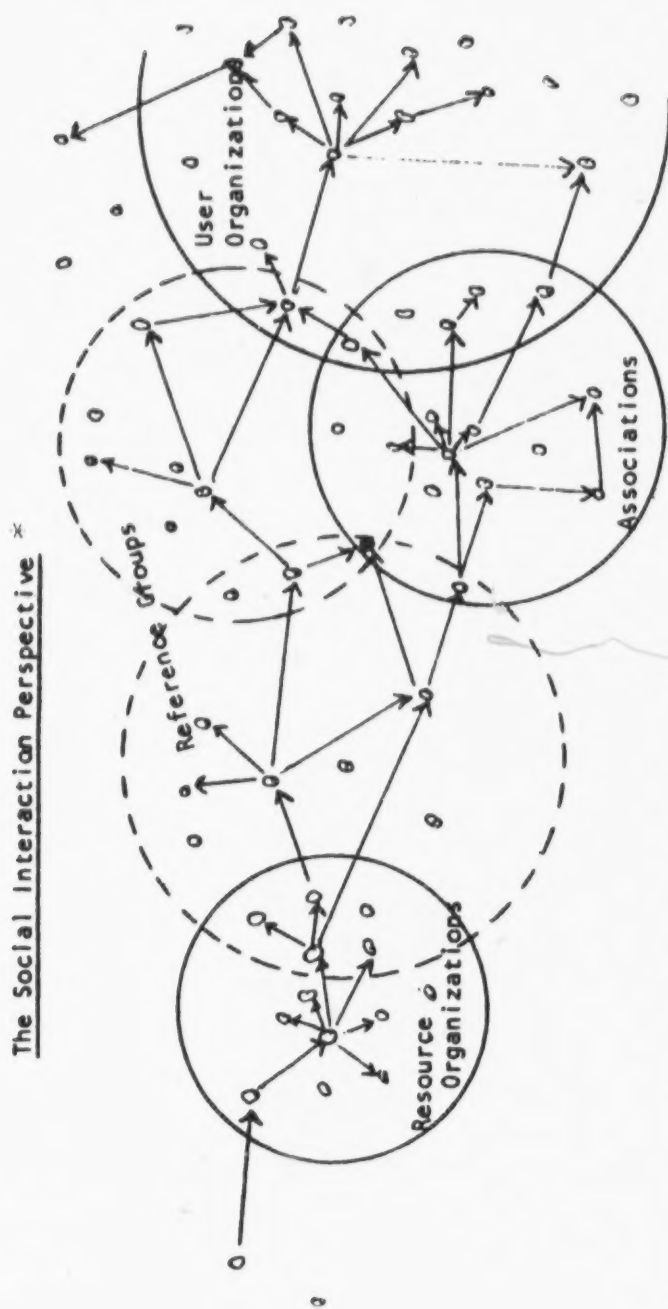
We hope that during the brainstorming sessions tomorrow you will add to both the list of things you can do to help your field agent and the list of what he can do for you. Tomorrow afternoon you will hear the field agents themselves describe their roles in some uncensored remarks.

In order that there not be any misunderstanding let me state for the record that this program is one which we take very seriously. We are going to do everything in our power to succeed. Plans are currently underway to increase our capacity to respond to the needs of schools like yours. We are building back-up support mechanisms which look far beyond next year. This commitment to planned change is not one which we take lightly and we urge you to join us in planning beyond the follow-up portion of the program which is slated for next year.

In closing I would like to say that we are quite frankly impressed by the quality of the people whom you sent us. They have complicated my life in a very rewarding kind of way. I'm going to miss them next year but I suspect that the excitement which they have provided this year will be supplied by the fact that next year holds still another new set of experiences, this time connected with providing support services for the field agents. In the meantime we are all in this together. Thanks again for coming. Don't be bashful with your questions. This is your conference as much as ours.

APPENDIX

Diagram 1



Major Points Stressed:

- Personal Relationships
- Group Memberships and Identifications
- Social Structure - Power and Influence Structures
- Proximity, Cosmopolitanism
- Opinion Leadership Structure

Spokesmen: Everett Rogers, James Coleman, Elihu Katz, Herbert Menzel, Richard Carlson, Paul Mort

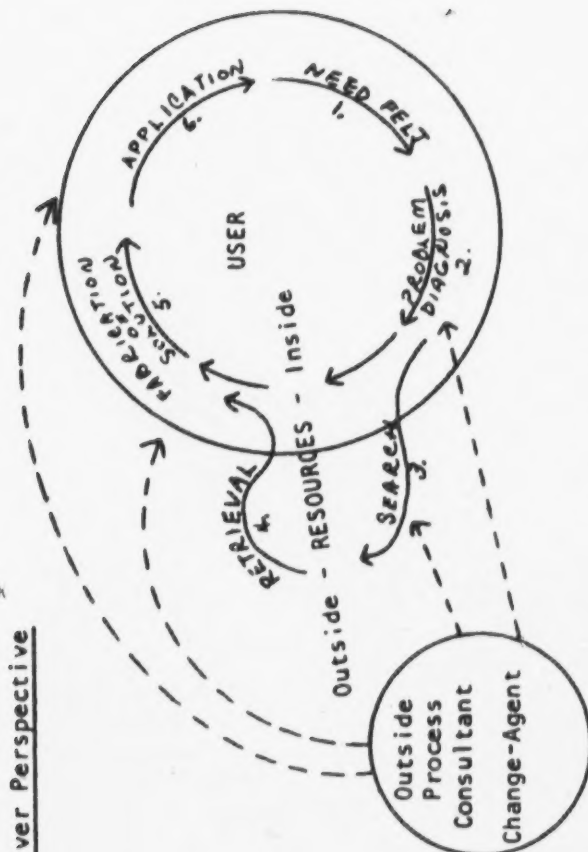
Prototypes: Diffusion of Innovations in farm practices, spread of new drugs among physicians.

Key:

- ○ Individuals in the social system.
- Flow of new knowledge.
- Formal organizational structures
- - - Informal structures.

*Reproduced from Ronald G. Havelock, Planning For Innovation Through Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1969, pp. 11-5.

Diagram 2



Major Points Stressed:

The User's Need is the Paramount Consideration
Diagnosis is Part of the Process

The Outsider is a Catalyst Consultant or Collaborator but the User must find the Solution Himself or See it as His Own
Internal Resources should be fully Utilized
Self-initiated Change has the Firmest Motivational Basis and the Best Prospects for Long-Term Maintenance

Spokesmen:

Goodwin Watson, Ronald Lippitt, Herbert Thelen, Matthew Miles, Charles Jung

Prototypes:

Organizational self-renewal, mental health consultation.

*Reproduced from Ronald G. Havelock, Planning For Innovation Through Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1969, pp. 11-12.

FIGURE 1

A CLASSIFICATION SCHEMA OF PROCESSES RELATED TO AND NECESSARY FOR CHANGE IN EDUCATION

	RESEARCH	DEVELOPMENT			DIFFUSION		ADOPTION		INSTITUTIONALIZATION
		INVENTION	DESIGN	DISSEMINATION	DEMONSTRATION	TRIAL	INSTALLATION		
OBJECTIVE	To advance knowledge	To formulate a new solution to an operating problem or to a class of operating problems, i.e., <u>to innovate</u>	To order and to systematize the components of the invented solution; to construct an innovation package for institutional use, i.e., <u>to engineer</u>	To create widespread awareness of the invention among practitioners, i.e., <u>to inform</u>	To afford an opportunity to examine and assess operating qualities of the invention, i.e., <u>to build conviction</u>	To build familiarity with the invention and provide a basis for assessing the quality, value, fit, and utility of the invention in a particular institution, i.e., <u>to test</u>	To fit the characteristics of the invention to the characteristics of the adopting institution, i.e., <u>to operationalize</u>	To assimilate the invention as an integral and accepted component of the system, i.e., <u>to establish</u>	
CRITERIA	Validity (internal and external)	Face Validity (appropriateness) --- Estimated Viability --- Impact (relative contribution)	Institutional Feasibility --- Generalizability --- Performance	Intelligibility --- Fidelity --- Pervasiveness --- Impact (extent to which it affects key targets)	Credibility --- Convenience --- Evidential Assessment	Adaptability --- Feasibility --- Action	Effectiveness --- Efficiency ---	Continuity --- Valuation --- Support	
RELATION TO CHANGE	Provides basis for invention	Produces the invention	Engineers and packages the invention	Informs about the invention	Builds conviction about the invention	Tries out the invention in the context of a particular situation	Operationalizes the invention for use in a specific institution	Establishes the invention as a part of an ongoing program; converts it to a "non-innovation"	

Diagram 3

Egon G. Guba. "Methodological Strategies for Educational Change." (Paper presented to Conference on Strategies for Educational Change. Washington, D.C. November 8-10, 1965, p. 10) Mimeo.